

# The SUNSHINE

The Official Publication of The Paralyzed Veterans of America • Florida Chapter



**HAPPY**

*Holidays*



Florida Chapter

### INSIDE THE ISSUE

President’s Message .....3

Calendar of Events.....4

National Director’s Message .....5

Vaccinations.....6

Classified Ads..... 7-8

PVA Woman’s Retreat .....9

Advocacy Report..... 10

Clubhouse Birthdays ..... 11

On Location ..... 14, 19, 20-21

News Roundup..... 16-18



#### Florida Chapter

#### Paralyzed Veterans of America Florida Chapter

3799 North Andrews Avenue  
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33309  
Phone: 954-565-8885 or 800-683-2001  
FAX: 954-565-8843  
Email: PVAF@aol.com  
WEB: www.pvaf.com

*Have you moved or are you planning a move? If you are reading this Newsletter and it was not mailed to you, please call us or e-mail your updated address and contact information: (954) 565-8885 pvaf@aol.com*

### OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President ..... Maria Miranda  
Vice-President.....  
Secretary ..... Laquantis Morton  
Treasurer ..... Joseph Delvecchio  
Director ..... Kenneth Roberts  
Director ..... Hartley Key  
Director ..... Charles Corley  
Director ..... Michael Fidler  
Director ..... Ian Vaquerol  
Director ..... Noel Burns  
Director ..... Jose Gonzalez

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Advocacy ..... Michael Fidler  
Fundraising ..... Noel Burns  
Healthcare/Miami ..... Ian Vaquero  
Healthcare/West Palm Beach ... Charles O. Brown  
Membership ..... Ian Vaquero  
Research & Education .....  
Sports ..... Jose Gonzalez  
VAVAS, Miami ..... Kenneth Roberts  
Volunteer Coordinator ..... Veronica Amador

### SUNSHINE STAFF

Executive Director..... Veronica Amador

### PVAF FLORIDA CHAPTER SUB OFFICE

#### MIAMI VA HEALTH CARE CENTER

1201 North West 16th Street, Room 1C-134  
Miami, Florida 33125  
Telephone/Fax 305-575-3304

#### SCI HOTLINE NUMBERS

S.C.I. Outpatient Clinic Practitioner  
Direct: 888-276-1785 ext.14520  
Appt. Only: 888-274-1785  
ext. 13587 or 13588

#### PVA SERVICE OFFICE

Raul Acosta, NSO  
Miami VA Health Care Center  
1201 North West 16th Street, Room 1C-139  
Miami, Florida 33125  
305-575-7180 or 800-795-3591  
Fax: 305-575-7181

#### PVA SERVICE OFFICE

VA Regional Office  
P.O. Box 1437  
St. Petersburg, Florida 33731-9968  
727-319-7470 or 800-795-3594

# President's Message

Maria Miranda

President, PVA Florida Chapter

PVA Florida Chapter Members and Associates, SCI/D Clinic Patients and Staff, PVA National Headquarters, Bruce W. Carter VA Medical Center Veterans and Staff, Caregivers, Family Members, Sponsors, Supporters, and Friends, Happy Holidays! I hope that 2023 has been kind.

First, I want to take a moment to honor and remember those members that have fallen: Mr. Tom Corey, Mr. Alvin Kublin and Mr. Anibal Carvajal; they are gone, but not forgotten.



I would also like to recognize the decades of selfless service performed by our Past President, Juan Perez. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to our members. Your term may be over, but your words and guidance will always be welcomed by Florida Chapter.

This year has been full of fun and adventure. During Spring, we had a great time attending diving clinics in West Palm Beach. In July, the PVA Florida Chapter Sports Team participated in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Portland, OR. Our team earned many, many medals (thank you Cynthia!) and enjoyed the comradery with and competition against other PVA chapters. Thank you, Alex Maitre, for being a great coach and supporter for our Veteran Athletes. You motivate us to be better, and your direction encourages us to believe in ourselves. You were instrumental in the success of the planning and execution of our outings, and for this I want to say I am sincerely thankful.

From September 30th to October 3rd, I had the pleasure of attending the Women Veterans Empowerment Retreat held in Orlando, FL. Leadership from many different PVA Chapters received new and updated information on PVA programs available to us. These great programs cannot work themselves, and I cannot do it alone. I am counting on ALL of you to let us know what is broken, missing, what needs to change, or what needs improvement. If you have ideas, let's talk. Everyone, please attend our quarterly general membership meetings, either in person or by Zoom. I would like to say thank you to Tammy Jones, Anne Robinson and Cheryl Vines, for an amazing week!

November was very special. First, the City of Sunrise donated \$1000 to our Chapter. They continue to be a strong supporter of our members. A week later, we had an outstanding turnout for our Thanksgiving luncheon. Contrary to popular belief about how the weather would be that day, it did not rain. It was great to see our inpatient and outpatient members enjoying the festivities. The spread was delicious, the atmosphere was festive, and it was a blessing to be in the presence of our great members, for whom I give thanks. With all of you paving the way, you prepared the generations that followed, including mine. The following week I had the privilege of handing out five Thanksgiving baskets and four gift cards, thanks to the generosity of the GFWC Coco Plum Woman's Club. You are greatly appreciated, Sarah Warren!

This month we will have our Christmas luncheon on December 14th. It will be an honor for me to see more of you at this get together. We need to get an accurate head count, so please send an email to [pvaf@aol.com](mailto:pvaf@aol.com) or call our PVA office at 954-565-8885. It is also important for each of you to either confirm or update your contact information, so please take the time to do that.

Looking ahead, our fifty-meter target is the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, being held in New Orleans, LA from July 25th to July 30th. Everybody that can compete should compete. Let's represent PVA Florida Chapter and have fun while we are doing it! You can expect continued bocci, archery, bowling, and diving clinics, the annual golf tournament, and friendly tournaments between Gulf Chapter, Central Florida Chapter, and Florida Chapter. In addition, we are restarting our traditional yearly banquet separate from the golf tournament. My goal is to have more get togethers so we can re-connect, share memories, and create new ones.

I am here for you, our members. Together, let's bring the sunshine back to Florida Chapter. Blessings to all of you, and happy holidays.

Warmest Regards,

Maria Miranda  
President  
PVA Florida Chapter



# Calendar of Events 2023

## November 2023

### November 02, 2023

Pizza Day  
Miami VA Hospital

### November 07, 2023

BOD Meeting  
Via ZOOM

### November 11, 2023

BBQ Luncheon  
Miami VA Medical Center

### November 11, 2023

Veterans Day - Office Closed due to holiday

### November 16, 2023

Thanksgiving Luncheon  
Miami VA Hospital

### November 23, 2023

Thanksgiving - Office Closed

### November 24, 2023

Office Closed in Observance of Thanksgiving Holiday

## December 2023

### December 06, 2023

Pizza Day  
Miami VA Medical Center

### December 16, 2023

Holiday Luncheon  
Miami VA Hospital

### December 19, 2023

BOD Meeting  
Via ZOOM

### December 25, 2023

Merry Christmas

### December 20 - January 02

Office Closed due to Christmas/New Year's holiday

Visit us on the web @[WWW.PVAFL.ORG](http://WWW.PVAFL.ORG)

## Membership Report

As of November 30, 2023 PVA Florida Chapter membership consists of 352 regular Members & 122 Associates Members:

PVA Florida Chapter welcomes new member:

### The Sunshine

Wants to know what's on Your Mind?

Call or e-mail us with Your ideas, suggestions.

PVAFL@aol.com • 954-565-8885

## Advertisers in the Issue

Ryan Realty.....	7
First Nation Group .....	8
Mobility Works .....	12
Mobius Mobility .....	18
Ocean Conversions and Mobility .....	23
Rollx Vans .....	24

# VA Facilities

## Veterans Health Administration

Toll-Free Hotline (medical care)  
1-877-222-8387

## VA Regional Office, St. Petersburg

PO Box 1437  
St. Petersburg, FL 33731  
1-800-827-1000

## Regional Processing Office

Atlanta, GA (educational claims)  
PO Box 54346  
Atlanta, GA 30308  
1-888-442-4551

## VA Insurance Center

(VA Insurance)  
PO Box 42954  
Philadelphia, PA 19101  
1-800-669-8477

## VA Health Administrative Center:

(CHAMPVA and Spina Bida health care)

CHAMPVA inquiries:

PO Box 65023, Denver, CO 80206-5023

CHAMPVA claims:

PO Box 65024, Denver, CO 80206-5024

Spina Bida inquiries and claims:

PO Box 65025, Denver, CO 80206-5025

1-800-733-8387

## VA Loan Guaranty Eligibility Center

(Certificates of eligibility)

PO Box 20729

Winston Salem, NC 27120

1-888-244-6711

## National Cemetery Administration

Office of Memorial Programs:

(Headstones & markers)

810 Vermont Avenue NW

Washington, DC 20420

1-800-697-6947

Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) Unit

Chicago VA Regional Office

1-800-829-4833

## Miami VA Health Care Medical Center:

1201 NW 16 Street

Miami, FL 33125

1-888-276-1785

## VA Outpatient Clinic

9800 West Commercial Blvd.

Sunrise, FL 33351

Phone: (954) 475-5500

## VA Medical Center

7305 N Military Trail

West Palm Beach, FL 33410-6400

1-800-972-8262

# National Director

Maria Miranda - National Director PVA Florida Chapter



PVA Florida Chapter Members and Associates, Happy Holidays!

First, I would like to thank Redzuan Razak for the time he devoted while serving as the previous National Director.

From October 20th to October 24th, I attended the PVA Fall Board of Directors Meeting, held in Orlando, FL. The first order of business was the Audit Presentation, where we were briefed on the status of our organization. I am happy to report that all areas of the National Headquarters that were audited for accuracy and accounting were outstanding. We were given the tools to perform our own internal audits, to prepare for the audits they will conduct on the chapters. I have already distributed this information to Veronica in preparation for our audits, which have already started. There were also presentations from the many national committees, describing the activities they performed throughout the year. Finally, training was conducted for Chapter Presidents and Executive Directors regarding the two-way flow of communications between Chapters and Headquarters, chain of command, and administrative programs. The key takeaway for our members I will reiterate: If you have an issue, go to the NSO, Raul Acosta, the CHLO, Ian Vaquero, or myself. If you go straight to National Headquarters, they will take your information and give it back to us for action. Please come to us first.

This time of year is hard for many of us, but we are in this together, and if anyone understands, I do. If you need someone to talk with, there are professionals you can reach at the SCI/D clinic or the VA Crisis Line. You can call, chat, or text directly from the website: <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>; you can dial from your phone 988, then press "1"; or you can text 838255. I am not a professional counselor, but if you want to talk with somebody that you know can understand, you can reach out to me.

My hope is that as we venture into the holidays and the upcoming New Year, everyone can celebrate, find peace, and be safe. I am looking forward to great things for our Chapter and seeing all of you in 2024!

Felices Fiestas and Happy New Year!

Maria Miranda  
National Director  
PVA Florida Chapter

# Vaccinations | National MS Society

Yira M Rojas MSN, BSN, RN

Nurse Educator for the Nursing Professional Development Team

What is a vaccine? A vaccine is a form of medical treatment provided by your primary care provider to protect you from preventable diseases such as the influenza or COVID-19. Once provided to you, the body develops antibodies to help you fight the infection. Prevention of any ailment, through vaccines, is a key part of an MS patient's preservation of health and care at any age. The intermate has plenty of information about immunization, but for specific recommendations on vaccinations, view the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Recommended Adult Immunization Schedule for ages 19 years or older, United States, 2022 (National Multiple Sclerosis Society, 2023).

The CDC 2023-2024 Seasonal Flu Vaccine states that it is safe to receive the flu vaccine along with the COVID-19 vaccine, but is it safe for an MS Patient? The National Multiple Sclerosis Society, 2023 states, that none of the available vaccines contain live virus and the vaccines will not cause COVID-19. They also mentioned that vaccines have helped many people with MS and did not trigger an MS relapse. The risk of getting COVID-19 thus far outweighs any risk of having an MS relapse from the vaccine (NMSS, 2023). So, before getting any vaccine, always check with your provider to see if it is safe and to determine what is the best plan for you, but what about your MS medication? You will also need to coordinate with your provider to see which is the best time for you to receive your vaccination.

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society listed some of the most common vaccines you may want to discuss with your provider for example: Pneumonia Vaccine, Respiratory Syncytial Virus Vaccine, and Shingle Vaccine which are the most common vaccines for MS patients to safely take. If you are considering any other vaccine, talk to your provider, because some vaccines may not be indicated for patients with MS symptoms.

In summary, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society website states that experts from the American Academy of Neurology (AAN) reviewed the available scientific evidence on infections and vaccine used in multiple sclerosis and made recommendations in Practice Guideline: Infections and Vaccine use in Multiple Sclerosis, key messages from the Guideline (2023). As a patient with MS, we all know how important is to avoid triggers or relapse. Getting a cold or the flu can worsen our MS symptoms. Talking to your provider and discussing which vaccine is safe for you to have will protect you from getting a small cold that could be detrimental to your health. So, for this flu season, it's very important to make an appointment with your provider and consider how the medications you are taking for your MS can be affect by any vaccine you wish to take, and to determine the best time to receive a vaccine, which is either before treatment or after.

Reference: National Multiple Sclerosis Society, 2023: Vaccinations

# Classified Ads

Spokesman classified section is provided at no cost to PVAF members. Please call Maria Miranda by the first of the month prior to publication if you would like to advertise with us: (954) 565-8885.

If you are interested in ensuring quality health care, wheelchair sports, recreation, advocacy, ADA education and helping to improve the lives of those with SCI/D call today to Become a PVAF Associate Member! (954) 565-8885



**Paralyzed Veterans of America**



## STAY INFORMED

Email is the fastest way for Paralyzed Veterans to communicate with its members.

**DON'T MISS:**  
Latest News • Event Calendars • Special Offers • More

**NEW!** Make sure your contact information is current, so you receive the new monthly membership e-newsletter. You'll be the first to hear about events and other updates relevant to our members.

To Update Your Information: 800-748-5200, ext. 725 or 776  
members@pva.org

For Information: Email: PVA@PVA.org  
252-218-7776  
310001@pva.org

Facebook: ParalyzedVeterans  
Twitter: PVA1946

# General Estimating & Contracting



# (954) 834-3247

# www.gecflorida.com

## RYAN REALTY GROUP

"YOUR ACCESSIBILITY REALTOR®"



### SELLING • BUYING RENTING • RELOCATING

**RYAN GEBAUER, BROKER**  
954-696-7204

**WWW.RYANSELLSFLORIDA.COM**



# YOU WILL ALWAYS BE FIRST TO US.



Since 1992, First Nation Group has been the premier medical solutions provider to the VA and DoD. Our mission is to provide superior products and services to active military and veterans from hospital to home while giving back generously. First Nation Group is proud to support the Paralyzed Veterans of America Florida Chapter Annual Golf Tournament!



855.221.5332

[firstnationgroup.com](http://firstnationgroup.com)

Follow Us



# PVA Woman Veterans Empowerment Retreat

LaQuantis Morton

Ladies and gentlemen, since October was Breast Cancer Awareness Month, I hope that you are all getting mammograms and self-examinations of your breasts. Breast cancer is a condition that can affect men and women equally, but it is more common in women.

Doctors at Walter Reed Army Medical Center discovered in a 2009 study that the incidence of breast cancer in women in the armed forces is "significantly higher"—that is, 20% to 40% higher than in other women in the same age categories.

## Did you know?

SERVICE Act was signed into law on June 7th, 2022, and is named in honor of Dr. Kate Hendricks Thomas, a Marine Veteran and public health professional. Dr. Hendricks Thomas was deployed to Iraq in 2005, where she was exposed daily to a burn pit on base, and in 2018, was diagnosed with stage 4 breast cancer. Dr. Hendricks passed away on April 5th, 2022, at the age of 42.

Both the SERVICE Act and the Honoring our PACT Act (Pub. L. 117-168), which was signed into law in August 2022, focus on the health effects of toxic exposures. While the PACT Act expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic-exposures and certain Veterans of the Vietnam, Gulf War, and Post-9/11 eras, the SERVICE ACT focuses on ensuring that VA policy permits Veterans deployed to certain locations during certain periods of time to be eligible for a breast cancer risk assessment and mammography screening for breast cancer if a risk is found. While no direct link has been found between toxic exposure and breast cancer, VA is concerned about individual reports and is continuing studies to find out if toxic exposure may be a cause of breast cancer. Veterans should see your primary care provider to assess your risk for breast cancer.

## Potential exposures could include:

Open burn pits/airborne hazards; learn more: [Air Pollutants - Public Health \(va.gov\)](#)

Gulf War-related exposures; learn more: [Gulf War Exposures - Public Health \(va.gov\)](#)

Agent Orange; learn more: [Agent Orange - Public Health \(va.gov\)](#)

Radiation; learn more: [Radiation - Public Health \(va.gov\)](#)

Camp Lejeune contaminated water exposure; learn more: [Camp Lejeune: Past Water Contamination - Public Health \(va.gov\)](#)

Other exposures; learn more: [Military Exposures - Public Health \(va.gov\)](#)

The West Palm Beach VA Healthcare System (WPBVAHCS) is happy to mark a new milestone for the care of female veterans with the introduction of stereotactic breast biopsy in late October.

The WPBVAHCS is providing a stereotactic breast biopsy in which a mammography abnormality is targeted with a needle using cutting-edge computer technology. Typically, the irregularity is not palpable during a clinical examination by your primary care physician or during breast self-examination.

During PVA's Women Veterans Empowerment Retreat (WVER) in Orlando this past October, Maria Miranda and LaQuantis Morton spent a lot of time networking and forming relationships with other women veterans from different states. Maria Miranda and LaQuantis Morton were shocked, when Tammy Jones and Anna Robinson swore Maria in as the new president of the Florida Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America.

I want female veterans to know that they have support from the PVA. If you reside in Dade, Broward, West Palm Beach, Port St. Lucie, Martin, or Monroe counties. Maria Miranda your new president want to share what she has learnt at PVA's Women Veterans Empowerment Retreat. For further details, see the upcoming article. Please don't hesitate to contact the office at:

If you have any inquiries or needs

## Did you know?

Early in October, actor and disability rights activist Selma Blair assisted President Joe Biden in commemorating the heritage of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act, who started in Hollywood hits like "Legally Blonde" and "Cruel Intentions."

Blair, who said she is "a proud disabled woman," who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2018, walked together with Biden to a ceremony on the White House's south lawn with her cane and her service dog, an English Labrador named Scout.

She honored campaigner Judy Heumann, who she said "taught me my worth," and who assisted in securing the passage of legislation safeguarding the rights of individuals with disabilities

# Advocacy Report

Michael Fidler

Hello everyone! As most of you may know the mid-terms is coming up this November. I hope Dear Members,

Florida's breathtaking landscapes, diverse communities, and vibrant culture make it a wonderful place to call home. However, we understand that living with mobility challenges in the Sunshine State can bring about unique questions and concerns. That's why we want to hear from you, our valued members.

We invite you to share your questions, experiences, and challenges related to mobility issues in Florida. Your insights are invaluable, as they can help not only you but also fellow members who may be facing similar situations. Whether you're dealing with accessibility barriers, transportation dilemmas, or you have questions about resources and services available to residents with mobility impairments, your voice matters.

Here's how you can participate:

**\*\*1. Ask Your Questions:\*\***

Do you have questions about accessible transportation options in your area? Are you looking for information on wheelchair-friendly attractions, healthcare facilities, or support services in Florida? Perhaps you're curious about specific laws and regulations that impact individuals with mobility impairments. Whatever your questions or concerns, feel free to share them.

**\*\*2. Share Your Experiences:\*\***

Have you had noteworthy experiences, whether positive or challenging, in your community as you navigate mobility issues? Your personal stories and insights can be a source of inspiration and guidance for others who are dealing with similar circumstances.

**\*\*3. Offer Suggestions and Solutions:\*\***

If you've discovered accessible and accommodating places, services, or resources in Florida, please share them with your fellow members. Your recommendations can make a real difference in someone else's life.

**\*\*4. Connect and Collaborate:\*\***

Let's create a supportive environment where members can connect, collaborate, and provide solutions to each other's questions and challenges. Together, we can find solutions and make Florida a more accessible place for all.

You can submit your questions, experiences, and suggestions by replying to this newsletter or by reaching out to our dedicated support team. We'll collect your input and provide answers, resources, and support in future editions of our newsletter.

At PVAF, we are committed to serving our members and building a strong, supportive community. Let's work together to ensure that everyone has the information and resources they need to live life to the fullest, regardless of mobility challenges.

Thank you for being a part of our community, and we look forward to hearing from you!

Keep smiling

Michael Fidler  
Director  
Paralyzed Veterans of America Florida Chapter



## PVA Florida Clubhouse Birthdays

PVAF, Improving the Lives of Those with Spinal Cord Injury and Disease

### November Birthday

Michelle Allen.....	Nov 01
Carlos A. Leon .....	Nov 01
Fay L. Anderson Smith.....	Nov 02
Larry T. Smith .....	Nov 02
Harvey Goodman.....	Nov 06
Gaetano J. Tata.....	Nov 06
Tyrone Vance Owens Woods..	Nov 06
Maria M. Miranda.....	Nov 06
Peter G. Morehouse.....	Nov 07
Lawrence I. Wurman .....	Nov 08
Pedro L. Rivera.....	Nov 09
Ronald A. Seeney.....	Nov 09
Robert L. Fecske.....	Nov 10
Dennis R. Bloomquist .....	Nov 10
Sylvester Thomas, Jr. ....	Nov 11
Andrew L. Cunninghame ..	Nov 12
Winston D. Cover .....	Nov 14
Roderick E. Gordon .....	Nov 14
Robert G. LeeTom .....	Nov 15
Luis R. Fernandez .....	Nov 16
Johnny L. Pointer.....	Nov 17
Martin M. O'Connor.....	Nov 17
Howard M. Dick.....	Nov 18
Paul J. Sadowski .....	Nov 20
Allen T. Smith.....	Nov 21
Donald R. Gibbs.....	Nov 22
Rick D. Griswold .....	Nov 22
Hubert J. Shifflett.....	Nov 22
David A. Korpinen.....	Nov 23
Harold R. Lloyd.....	Nov 25
Loren L. Wieland .....	Nov 26
Otis W. Smith .....	Nov 27
Tony Henderson.....	Nov 27
Veronica P. Amador.....	Nov 27
Ricardo E. Cumberbatch...	Nov 29
Robert A. Nesbitt.....	Nov 30

### December Birthday

Daniel L. Kilian.....	Dec 01
John C. Fryman .....	Dec 01
Thomas K. Fellion.....	Dec 01
James J. Masterson .....	Dec 01
Michael A. Cleveland.....	Dec 03
Raymond Chrampanis.....	Dec 03
Curtis E. Clark.....	Dec 03
Richard MacConnell .....	Dec 06
Rudolph J. Williams .....	Dec 08
Julio Alvarado .....	Dec 09
Michael A. Fidler .....	Dec 09
Manford A. Lunde .....	Dec 10
Michael R. Grimm.....	Dec 12
Enrique Lopez .....	Dec 12
Robert D. Medlock, Sr.....	Dec 13
Philip Rubin.....	Dec 13
Jaime A. Meza .....	Dec 13
Stephen H. Dollins .....	Dec 14
Raul Acosta .....	Dec 14
Laquantis S. Morton.....	Dec 15
Rolando V. Quintero .....	Dec 16
Sih Efil.....	Dec 23
Earl L. Goldberg.....	Dec 23
Raymond J. Alexander .....	Dec 24
Thomas H. Corey.....	Dec 24
Joseph J. Ice.....	Dec 25
Pedro (Pete) J. Ruiz.....	Dec 25
James E. Freese.....	Dec 26
Alfred P. Romano.....	Dec 27
Rene Ramirez.....	Dec 28
Calvin L. Lanham .....	Dec 29
James E. Eddie , Jr. ....	Dec 29

### January Birthday

Ronald E. Groves .....	Jan 01
Christina M. Lowe .....	Jan 01
Richard G. Federgreen .....	Jan 02
Dennis F. Gager .....	Jan 02
Ruben F. Sepulveda .....	Jan 03
Arthur M. Ross .....	Jan 04
Murray Horowitz .....	Jan 05
Larry C. Reber .....	Jan 05
Benito Matos .....	Jan 06
Ozzie Oliva .....	Jan 06
Harold D. Bernardy .....	Jan 08
Dennis L. Buchanan .....	Jan 08
Dana Gonsalves .....	Jan 08
Dennis G. Mahan .....	Jan 08
Edward J. Meck .....	Jan 08
Chatriex A. Goodson .....	Jan 10
Irwin R. Needle .....	Jan 10
Julio R. Eiroa .....	Jan 11
Keith D. Seekamp .....	Jan 12
Glenn Amundsen .....	Jan 14
Thomas Marchini .....	Jan 14
Nicole M. Pilatos .....	Jan 14
Marvin Jones .....	Jan 15
Edward A. Jurison .....	Jan 15
Stewart M. Rosenkrantz .....	Jan 15
Christopher A. Boscardin ..	Jan 18
Fitzgerald Brereton .....	Jan 19
Carlos R. Colbert .....	Jan 19
Jeffrey E. Hill .....	Jan 20
Alfonso Sanchez .....	Jan 20
Richard D. Wilson .....	Jan 20
Richard H. Ziemba .....	Jan 20
James T. Brewer .....	Jan 21
David A. Weinstein .....	Jan 21
David A. Kleiman .....	Jan 22
Bernard Feiler .....	Jan 23
Andrew L. Ferguson .....	Jan 23
Douglas S. Morgan .....	Jan 23
James D. Murray .....	Jan 24
Stanley R. Pauer .....	Jan 24
Andre M. Sinclair .....	Jan 25
Conney L. Clark .....	Jan 27
Jay R. Forward .....	Jan 27
Patrick P. Pica .....	Jan 27
Raymond E. Poole .....	Jan 29
Santiago J. Tobares .....	Jan 30

# Connect With What



 BraunAbility

**USA's largest accessible van dealer!**

**MobilityWorks**

5601 Powerline Rd., Suite 203

Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309

954-871-2002

[www.mobilityworks.com](http://www.mobilityworks.com)

# Matters



## Being there makes a difference

It could be a simple trip to the mall, a ride to the movies or just a visit to friend's home. The little things in life can make a big difference. It's why MobilityWorks has been helping veterans connect with who and what matters most since 1997.

Veterans have unique needs so we treat each of them as individuals. First of all, we listen. Then, we work together to find the best solution.

MobilityWorks considers it a privilege to help our nation's veterans. Every day we work with local VISNs and service organizations to make the process of securing accessible vehicles, lifts and driving equipment for veterans as easy as possible.

MobilityWorks has more than 70 locations across the country with the largest selection of accessible vehicles and adaptive solutions:

- Minivans, full-size vans and trucks
- The latest in adaptive technology
- Complete maintenance and service
- Rental vans — veterans receive a 10% discount

MobilityWorks is committed to serving you. Contact us today so we can evaluate your needs and find a solution that best fits your lifestyle.





# On Location

Florida Chapter





# Happy Holidays

FROM



---

Florida Chapter

# News Round-Up

Recent news regarding legislation and regulatory actions affecting veterans and people with disabilities.

Written and produced by Paralyzed Veterans of America - Government Relations Department

## **CONGRESS APPROVES TWO-TIERED FUNDING BILL**

This week, Congress approved a two-tiered, continuing resolution (CR) that keeps the government running into early next year. The first-tier funds the departments of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, Energy, Veterans Affairs, and Agriculture through January 19, 2024. The second-tier funds all remaining government agencies through February 2, 2024. It does not include any unpopular spending cuts or policy provisions, which allowed it to clear both chambers in a bipartisan manner.

The last CR passed at the end of September and extended government funding through November 17. None of the 12 annual appropriation bills have been approved by both chambers and the new CR buys lawmakers time to work out a more permanent funding solution for the current fiscal year. Although Congress could reach agreement on some of the regular funding bills and pass them ahead of the deadlines established in this new CR, recent trends indicate that such action would likely prove to be difficult.

## **PVA SUBMITS COMMENTS ON PROPOSED RULE TO UPDATE SECTION 504 AND ACCESSIBLE MDE REQUIREMENTS**

PVA, in collaboration with the Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities (CCD), submitted a comment in response to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) proposed rule to update an antidiscrimination law and medical treatment access requirements for people with disabilities. The proposed rule amends a 50-year old law, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which prohibits disability discrimination by medical facilities and providers that receive HHS-funding, like Medicare. The proposed rule included requirements for accessible medical diagnostic equipment (MDE).

PVA spearheaded the MDE comments. PVA and CCD urged HHS to adopt an enforceable standard requiring MDE to have a 17-inch low transfer height; specific requirements for providers to acquire accessible exam tables, chairs, and weight scales; and mandated staff training on the use of accessible MDE. The CCD comment, submitted November 13, was signed by over 70 national disability rights organizations.

## **SVAC HOLDS HEARING ON VA RESEARCH**

On November 1, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee (SVAC) held a hearing titled, "Foundation of Care: Examining Research at the Department of Veterans Affairs." Representing VA on the single-panel hearing was Dr. Rachel Ramoni, Chief Research and Development Officer from the Office of Research and Development. She was joined by Dr. Patricia Hastings, Chief Consultant for Health Outcomes and Military Exposures, and Dr. Sumitra Muralidhar, Program Director for the Million Veteran Program. Matthew Kuntz, Executive Director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness Montana, also testified at the hearing.

As the only non-VA witness, Mr. Kuntz offered a unique perspective working with veterans outside of the VA health care system. Key takeaways from Mr. Kuntz's testimony were the need for VA to prioritize research concerning toxic exposures, spinal cord injuries, prosthetics, and brain health.

Several senators questioned research priorities within VA as they grappled with how long it takes research to be operationalized into improved care outcomes. Information about the Million Veteran Program was also a focus. The Million Veteran Program is a voluntary genetics project that VA has been working on for several years. Recent publications have highlighted discoveries like genetic markers shared among veterans who have died by suicide.

You can watch the hearing [here](#).



# News Round-Up

*Recent news regarding legislation and regulatory actions affecting veterans and people with disabilities.  
Written and produced by Paralyzed Veterans of America - Government Relations Department*

## **WOMEN VETERAN TASK FORCE PUBLISHES FINAL REPORT**

The House Veterans' Affairs Committee's (HVAC) Women Veteran Task Force (WVTF) recently published its final report. Reauthorized earlier this year, the WVTF was an opportunity for various HVAC subcommittees to focus on women veteran issues within each area of jurisdiction.

The WVTF invited participants from several different veterans service organizations, VA, private sector experts, and individual veterans to a series of roundtables on various topics. The topics included women specific cancers and care, security at VA medical centers, access to disability benefits, and underemployment.

The report makes several recommendations to Congress and VA on ways it could better support women veterans. Key recommendations include updated training and guidance for regional office staff when it comes to processing benefits claims for women veterans, updating screening for women veterans who are vulnerable to rare cancers, improving interoperability of sexual harassment and assault reporting at VA facilities, and working to increase GI Bill usage by women veterans.

The report can be read [here](#).

## **DAMA SUBCOMMITTEE REVIEWS PENDING LEGISLATION**

The House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs (DAMA) recently held a legislative hearing to look at several pieces of pending legislation. The hearing was originally scheduled to take place on October 24, but was delayed roughly two weeks while the House worked to choose a new Speaker. Included among the 10 bills examined by the Subcommittee was H.R. 3790, the Justice for ALS Veterans Act of 2023, which would authorize payment of a higher Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) rate to surviving spouses of veterans who die from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) regardless of whether the veteran had a disability rated as totally disabling for a continuous period of at least eight years immediately preceding death. The additional rate of DIC is commonly known as the "DIC Kicker."

The Justice for ALS Veterans Act was drafted with PVA's help and this change is a key part of our efforts to improve VA benefits and services for ALS veterans and their survivors. The current version of the bill asks VA to study and inform Congress on other conditions with high mortality rates that deserve similar consideration from lawmakers. VA recommended incorporating a clearer definition of high mortality rate in the bill to ensure implementation would be consistent with congressional intent.

The Subcommittee also looked at H.R. 5890, the Review Every Veterans Claim Act of 2023, which seeks to limit the VA's authority to deny a veteran's claim solely based on the veteran's failure to appear for a medical examination associated with the claim. Thousands of veterans' claims for service connection, claims for increase, and for other benefits like Total Disability Individual Unemployability and Aid and Attendance have been denied solely on the basis of missing an examination. There are many legitimate reasons why a veteran may not be able to attend a scheduled exam. We are also aware of numerous instances where VA contractors have erroneously recorded the veteran as a "no show." PVA strongly supports passage of this legislation, which would ensure that a missed exam isn't the only basis for denying a veteran's claim.

At the request of the Subcommittee, PVA submitted a written statement for the hearing. To view the hearing or read the statement, [click here](#).

# News Round-Up

*Recent news regarding legislation and regulatory actions affecting veterans and people with disabilities.  
Written and produced by Paralyzed Veterans of America - Government Relations Department*

## NEWS OF NOTE

### **Economic Opportunity Subcommittee Holds Pending Legislation Hearing**

On November 2, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee Economic Opportunity Subcommittee held a pending legislation hearing on several pieces of legislation and a few draft bills.

Several of the bills discussed focused on improving the transition process for separating servicemembers and increasing access to commercial drivers' licenses. Also discussed were a few student veteran bills that would improve the VA work study program, increase the housing allowance for online learning, and reduce barriers to the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship.

There was also a bill that seeks to reduce veteran suicide and another that would create a fourth administration within VA focused on economic opportunity issues such as education and employment.

One draft bill that caused strong reactions would move the Department of Labor's (DOL) Veterans' Employment and Training Service from DOL to the VA. Several Subcommittee members, VA and DOL, and veterans service organizations were staunchly opposed to the legislation.

You can watch the hearing [here](#).

### **HVAC Oversight Hearing on Veteran Employment**

On November 7, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee (HVAC) held an oversight hearing titled, "Veterans Helping Veterans: The Impact of America's Business on Veteran Employment and Opportunity." Several business leaders testified before the Committee and shared how their companies are making veteran employment a priority. These leaders included the directors of veteran employment programs for Walmart, Verizon, Home Depot, as well as the President of Hiring Our Heroes. Several topics arose during the hearing, such as forced arbitration clauses, gender pay gaps, advancement opportunities, and ways in which Congress can improve the employment landscape for all veterans.

You can watch the hearing [here](#).

## WEBINARS & HEARINGS

### **Reminder: Advocacy Training Webinars Available**

PVA's five-part series, "The 5 W's: The who, what, where, why, and when of our government and the art of advocacy," is now on PVA.org. You can learn more about the Fundamentals of Government, the Legislative Process, Stakeholders of Advocacy, Understanding the Issues and Becoming a Change Agent, and Connecting the Dots. If you have any questions about the series, please contact PVA Grassroots Advocacy Manager Lisa Elijah at [LisaE@PVA.org](mailto:LisaE@PVA.org).

### **Upcoming Veterans' Committee Activities**

Please visit the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee webpages for information on upcoming hearings and markups.



# On Location

Florida Chapter

## THANKSGIVING BASKETS AND GIFT CARDS TO THE GENEROSITY OF THE GFWC COCO PLUM WOMAN'S CLUB.



## DISABILITY EXPO 2023





# On Location

Florida Chapter

## DISABILITY EXPO 2023



## PVA WOMEN EVENT





# On Location

Florida Chapter

## THANKSGIVING LUNCHEON AT MIAMI VA



## TRICK OR TROT 5K AT MARKHAM PARK, SUNRISE, FL



MOBIUS  
MOBILITY



**FREEDOM.  
INDEPENDENCE.  
iBOT®.**



The iBOT® Personal Mobility Device is available nationwide and covered at **NO COST** to qualified Veterans through VA FSS #36F79721D0202. Contact your VA physician or therapist to see if the iBOT® PMD is right for you.



1-833-3GO-IBOT  
(1-833-346-4268)



info@mobiusmobility.com



iBOT® by Mobius Mobility



mobiusmobility.com



@mobiusmobility



@mobiusmobility



CHARITY EVENT



Florida Chapter



PRESENTS OUR 2024

**GOLF**

**TOURNAMENT**

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2024**

**COME JOIN US!**



The Paralyzed Veterans of America Florida Chapter is excited about our Annual Golf Classic. This fund-raiser has been developed to support the programs of the PVA. Please join us in improving the lives of those with spinal cord injury or dysfunction.





Florida Chapter

**Paralyzed Veterans of America Florida Chapter**  
3799 North Andrews Ave.  
Oakland Park, FL 33309

NON-PROFIT  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
FT LAUD FL  
PERMIT 3366



## Your Life. Your Ride.



Rollx Vans is the only van manufacturer that delivers minivans and full-sized vans directly to your doorstep. Our mission is to listen to you to serve your needs and give you the freedom and mobility that you deserve.

- Certified Conversion Process
- 24 Hour Nationwide Service
- At-Home Delivery
- Industry-Leading Customer Satisfaction
- Competitive Financing Options
- Customized Just for You

**We take great pride in serving those who served our country.**

It's why we work with the Veterans Administration to make the process as simple as possible for you. This includes bringing the vehicle to the VA for inspection, taking care of all VA paperwork, and delivering the vehicle to your home once it's ready.

Veterans get **\$1,000 off** the purchase of your first Rollx van today!

Call **800-956-6668** or visit us at **[rollxvans.com](http://rollxvans.com)**.